5. *The* Description *and the* Benefits *of a Regular Education.*

5777

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

AT THE

Anniversary Meeting

OF THE

GENTLEMEN Educated at

St. Paul's School.

January 25*th.* $1\frac{699}{700}$.

Published at the Request of the Stewards.

By Samuel Bradford, *Rector of St.* Mary le Bow, *and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO MY

HONOURED FRIENDS

AND

School-Fellows

THE

STEWARDS

OF

St. *Paul's* School Feaſt.

John Tully *Eſq;*
Richard Robinſon *Eſq;*
Richard Crawley *Gent.*
Richard Lloyd *Gent.*
Anthony Smith *Gent.*
Robert Paltock *Gent.*
Edward Nelthorpe *Eſq;*
Dr. Thomas Sutton.

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Anthony Smith Gent.
Robert Pallock Gent.
Edward Nelthorpe Esq;
Dr. Thomas Sutton.

2 Timothy III. 14, 15.

But continue thou in the things which thou haſt learn'd and haſt been aſſur'd of, knowing of whom thou haſt learn'd them; and that from a Child thou haſt known the Holy Scriptures, —

THeſe are the Words of St. *Paul*, that excellent Apoſtle, whoſe Memory we this Day juſtly celebrate; *we*, whoſe Anceſtors were *Sinners of the Gentiles*, to whom he was particularly *ordain'd a Preacher and an Apoſtle and a Teacher in Faith and Verity*; *we*, who inhabit an Iſland, to which 'tis probable that this Apoſtle brought the firſt glad Tidings of Chriſtianity; and finally *we*, who beſides our general Obligation as Chriſtians, are now aſſembled upon a more particular occaſion alſo, to bleſs God for our Education in a School which bears his Name; where we learn'd, as many other good Leſſons, ſo particularly thoſe which this great Apoſtle taught, and were in our *Childhood* daily exercis'd in reading *the Holy Scriptures*, in the writing of which our Apoſtle had ſo conſiderable a part. 1 Tim. 1. 7.

It would add mightily to the Solemnity of our preſent Aſſembly, and ſtrangely increaſe the Joy of it, if on *this Day*, and in *this Place*, we could have St. *Auſtin*'s wiſh granted us, to hear St. *Paul* ſpeaking from the Pulpit to us. But ſince *that* cannot be, I judg'd it might prove both to our Satisfaction and Edification to entertain our ſelves with meditating upon ſome of his Words, and thoſe too ſuch, as he might probably have himſelf utter'd to us, if he had been here preſent with us, exhorting us to *continue in the things which we have learn'd*, &c.

They were written to *Timothy*, whom as St. *Paul*

 had

had taken along with him, whilst he was yet Young, first to attend, and afterwards to assist him in Preaching the Gospel, so finding him extraordinarily qualified, he appointed him to abide at *Ephesus*, to settle and govern the Church planted there, and to do the Office of a chief Pastor, or Bishop, in that City. And whereas there were certain Seducers started up, whom our Apostle describes, as Men equally vitiated in their Judgments and their
V. 8. Tempers, *Men of corrupt Minds*, and *reprobate concerning the Faith*; so in opposition to these, and as the Duty of his Office, he frequently admonisheth *Timothy* to continue stedfast himself, and to endeavour that others should do so, in the Profession of that Faith which he had re-
1 *Tim.* 6. 20. ceiv'd. Thus, *O* Timothy, *keep that which is committed* 2 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14. *to thy trust*; and again, *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. That good thing, which was* 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. *committed unto thee, keep*; and lastly, *The things which thou hast heard of me, among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also*; all which Passages, as well as that in our Text, do evidently refer to that *Formulary of Faith*, call'd by the Writers of the following Ages, *The Rule of Faith*, which was committed both to those who were enter'd into the Christian Church by Baptism, and to the Bishops and Pastors of it at their Ordination, and is the same in effect with that which we now call *the Apostles Creed*. This especially, with whatsoever other particulars for the farther explication of this *Rule of Faith*, *Timothy* had at any time heard and learn'd of St. *Paul*, or any other of the Apostles, he exhorts him to retain. *Continue thou in the things which thou hast learn'd.*

And hast been assur'd of; the word is ἐπιστώθης; the vulgar *Latin* reads it, *& credita sunt tibi*, as if it had been in the Copy they made use of, ἐπιστεύθης: but to keep to

those Copies which our Translators follow'd, the Word here us'd carries in it a fuller sense, importing that *Timothy* had not only receiv'd the things here spoken of by *hearsay*; but been fully inform'd, and upon considering the information entirely satisfied, upon solid and good grounds, of the truth of *those things which he had learn'd*; and accordingly it follows, *knowing of whom thou hast learn'd them.*

If it be read, as in our Copies, τινός, in the singular number, it must denote St. *Paul*; if τινῶν, in the plural, as the *Alexandrian* Manuscript has it, it must take in one more at least, probably *Barnabas* St. *Paul*'s Companion: but whether one or more it matters not, since the Persons he intimately convers'd with, had been Eye and Ear Witnesses of the things which they taught, and were of known Veracity and Probity. St. *Paul* to be sure was one of them, who was intimately known to *Timothy*, and had upon all occasions testified an especial regard to him, so that it could not be imagin'd that he would impose upon him. Besides that he himself, upon account of his miraculous conversion to the Christian Faith, was a more than ordinary Witness to it. Such were the Persons *of whom* Timothy *had learn'd*, and from a serious consideration of what they had taught him he became *assur'd*.

Nor was this all; but he had yet a farther advantage, both in order to his embracing and being confirm'd in the Faith of Christ, namely, that he had *known the Scriptures* from his very *Childhood*, by the Piety of those who had the care of his tender Years; which *Scriptures*, viz. those of the Old Testament, gave abundant evidence to the Doctrine of the Apostles, and were a standing Testimony to what they taught.

Having thus explain'd the Words, we may obſerve in them theſe *Three* Particulars, very proper to be conſider'd upon this Occaſion.

Firſt, The view which they give us of a juſt and regular Education.

Secondly, An Intimation contain'd in them of ſomething neceſſary on the part of the Learner, as well as of the Teacher. And

Thirdly, The great Obligation which ſuch Perſons are under, who have been well inſtructed, and aſſur'd of thoſe things which they have learn'd, *to continue in them.*

Firſt, We have here a view given us of a juſt and regular Education, in the inſtance of *Timothy*, to whom the Words are directed.

He had *known*, St. *Paul* tells him, *the Holy Scriptures from a Child*, no doubt, by the pious care of his Grandmother and Mother, mention'd by our Apoſtle a little before, where commending *the unfeigned Faith, which was in him*, he ſays, that *it dwelt firſt in his Grandmother* Lois, *and his Mother* Eunice, intimating that he deriv'd it from them, not certainly by meer deſcent, but by their carefully inſtructing and forming his tender mind; and the ſame Perſons, no queſtion, gave him alſo the *firſt knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.*

2. *Tim.* 1. 5.

'Tis true, he had a *Greek*, or *Gentile*, proſelyted, but not circumcis'd, to *his Father*; by which means he himſelf was not circumcis'd, till St. *Paul* from prudent Conſiderations thought fit to do it, after he was committed to his care; (the Father it ſeems govern'd in that matter, whilſt the Son was in his State of Infancy and Childhood, and not the Mother:) but to make amends for this diſadvantage, 'tis likely that both the Mother and Grandmother were the more ſedulous in his Inſtruction. Here then his good Education began; theſe

Acts 16. 1. V. 3.

pious

pious Women gave him *the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures from his Childhood.*

And that the good Work which they had begun might be effectually carried on, they, having themselves early embrac'd the Christian Doctrine, committed this their Charge to St. *Paul*, that as soon as he was capable he might attend him, and be farther instructed and improv'd by his Precepts and his Example. For altho' the first mention we meet with of him is in that passage of the *Acts of the Apostles*, where St. *Paul* is said to have come to *Derbe* and *Lystra*, yet 'tis very probable that he had attended the Apostle before that time, from a passage a little before the Text, where St. *Paul* tells him, that he had *fully known*, (the word is παρηκολούθησας which may fairly denote that he had known by attending the Apostle, by seeing, hearing, and observing) *his Doctrine, manner of Life, Purpose, Faith, Long-suffering, Patience, Persecutions, Afflictions, which came unto him at* Antioch, *at* Iconium, *at* Lystra. So that it seems he had been with him at *Iconium*, before he came to *Lystra*; and at *Antioch*, before he was at *Iconium*. 'Tis likely his Father was now dead, and he at the dispose of his Mother; and to whom could she better commit him, than to so admirable a Master as this; one who had himself had the most regular Education, as a *Jew*; *brought up in* Jerusalem, *at the feet of* the great *Gamaliel*, and *taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the Fathers*; one who had *profited in the Jews Religion above many his Equals in his own Nation*; one who could *thank God, that he had serv'd him from his Fore-fathers, with a pure Conscience*; one, whom as *it had pleas'd God to separate from his Mother's womb*, so in due time *he call'd him by his Grace, and reveal'd his Son* first *to him*, and then *by him*, and that in a very extraor-

Acts 16.1. V. 10,11. *Acts* 14.1. *ch.* 13. 1. *Acts* 22. 3. *Gal.* 1.14. 2 *Tim.* 1.3. *Gal.* 1.15, 16.

traordinary manner; one who *had not receiv'd the Gospel of Man; neither had been taught it, but by the* immediate *Revelation of Jesus Christ*; and finally one who, as he had receiv'd, so he taught the Gospel *with Demonstration and Power*, endeavouring to propagate the knowledge of it with the most exact fidelity, the most indefatigable Industry, and the most ardent Zeal that was possible. This was the Person, to whom young *Timothy* was committed for his farther improvement.

V. 12.

And as the Apostle took him along with him in his Travels, so upon all occasions he expreſt the greatest tenderness towards him, stiling him *his own Son in the Faith*, and *his dearly beloved Son*; and having at length found him a fit Person, from his own experience, as well as from the recommendation of others, he conſecrated him very early to the Work of the Ministry, and appointed him, whilst yet Young, to be Bishop of the Church of *Ephesus*. This was the Education of *Timothy*.

1 Tim. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 2. Acts 16. 2. 1 Tim. 4. 12.

And if from thence we would form an Idea of a just and regular Education, it must be to this purpose.

That in the first place Parents, those to whom God hath committed the principal care of their Off-spring, being themselves well instructed, prudent, virtuous and pious, make it their business, from the very dawning of Understanding and Reason, to cultivate and improve the Minds of their Young ones, instilling gradually, as their capacities shall be enlarg'd, such Principles, and inuring them to such Practices, as become Men and Christians.

Where both the Parents shall conspire, in carrying on the same design by the same methods, the Child will have an advantage above what *Timothy* seems to have had in his Childhood: but if either of them shall thorowly

rowly do their part, tho' the other ſhould prove more unapt or negligent, we ſee in this inſtance, that by God's Bleſſing it may have it's effect.

And here even the weaker Sex may be of ſingular uſe. For altho' our Apoſtle *would not ſuffer Women to teach, or to uſurp Authority over the Men*; but commands them *to learn of them in ſilence, and with all ſubjection*; yet we ſee he commends them for exerciſing Authority over and teaching their Children. And here indeed they have in divers reſpects the advantage of the Men; their tender Off-ſpring being firſt deliver'd by Nature into their Arms, they having, during their minority, the greateſt influence upon them, and it being conſequently their place and privilege to ſow the firſt ſeeds of Ingenuity, Virtue and Piety in them. But, where both Parents conſpire, each of them doing their proper part, the work is like to ſucceed beſt.

1 *Tim.* 2. 11, 12. 1 *Cor.* 14. 34, 35.

The next ſtep in a regular Education is, that the Parents having thus done, and ſtill continuing to do, as they have opportunity, what becomes them, both by their Inſtructions, Admonitions, Authority and Example, they take in the aſſiſtance of others to complete what they have begun, committing their Children to the care of ſuch choice Perſons, as ſhall be both able and willing to ſecond them in their deſigns and endeavours.

To this purpoſe, that they ſend them to well-manag'd Schools, where they may both be confirm'd and improv'd in the Principles and Practice of Virtue and Piety; and may receive ſuch farther Inſtructions, as may diſpoſe them to become wiſe and good and uſeful Men, in their ſeveral future Stations in the World.

And here great care is to be taken; for there are *Quacks* in *all Profeſſions*, as well as in that of *Phyſick*, and in

in none do they Practice more frequently or more dangerously, than in *this* of teaching Youth. An ill Method, or an ill management here will either Poyson, or at least weaken the Constitution of the Patient, and render him sickly and infirm thto the whole remaining course of his Life. An Error committed in this Instance is like a fault in the first concoction, never thorowly mended by any following digestions.

After Children's being continued at School so long, as to answer the ends for which they are sent thither, the next care is to place them under serious and judicious Directors of their following Studies, for the furnishing them with more Manly Learning; or to commit them to such prudent and virtuous Masters, as may Instruct them thorowly in the Arts and Mysteries which shall be found suitable to their Inclinations and Capacities.

And whilst they are passing through these several degrees of Education, especial care is to be taken, that they be well grounded in the Principles of Religion, the main and fundamental Articles of Faith and Practice; that they be both privately and publickly Catechiz'd in *a form of sound words*, us'd to read, and taught to understand the plain and practical parts especially of *the holy Scriptures*; constantly brought to the publick Worship of God, in the Company and under the Inspection of those that have the Charge of them; in a word, that they be led gradually into the habitual Practice of all those Instances of Piety and Virtue, which are proper to their Age and Condition. This is the Summ of what I intend by a just and regular Education.

Before I proceed to the next particular, give me leave only just to observe, how much it becomes Parents in the

the first Place, and all whom they entrust in the next, to discharge their Duty in this Instance.

Children stand in great need of this their care. The best that can be said of them is, that their minds are *rasæ tabulæ, blanks*, on which any Characters may be Written: but *Zophar*, in the Book of Job, carries the matter farther, when he tells us, that *Man is born like a wild asses Colt*, which experience confirms, in those especially who are under the disadvantage of a loose or careless Education. As they are Ignorant and dull, insensible of that which is good; so they are moreover untam'd and fierce, impatient of all restraint, violently bent upon their own will and humor, running wildly from one extravagance to another, to their own Perdition. Now 'tis Education, which must mollifie and tame, which must correct and cure by degrees this untoward disposition. Job 11.12.

And Childhood and Youth are, without all doubt, the proper Seasons for making this attempt. Then it is, that they have not contracted strong habits of Vice, which will be very difficultly broken. Then it is, that the Understanding is easily opened, the Memory retentive, and the Mind soft and tender, so that Impressions may be easily and deeply made upon it. Then it is, that they are perfectely at leisure to attend to what is said to them, not engag'd in an hurrey of business, nor eager in the pursuit of Secular Designs. If these Seasons be neglected, they are never to be retriev'd, nor the loss thorowly repair'd by any after care; no more than the Seasons of the Year can be recall'd by the careless Husbandman, who has neglected to sow his Seed, in the time appointed by God in Nature. In fine, by an early care, Piety and Virtue, and Learning of all kinds may be render'd easy and Pleasant; whereas by delay it will become extremely

hard at leaſt, a great pain and drudgery, if not an inſuperable difficulty, to acquire either intellectual or moral Habits.

To conclude this particular. Thoſe who have the charge of Youth, whether Parents or Maſters of any ſort, ſhould Remember that Providence hath committed them to their care, in order to their preſent and future welfare, and that an Account will be expected from them, how they have diſcharg'd this their truſt.

But to proceed to the next particular contain'd in the Words, *viz.*

Secondly, An Intimation of ſomething Neceſſary on the part of the Learners, as well as of the Teachers, and that is, a due Application of mind to what is taught them, and a ſerious Reflection upon what they have learn'd.

Timothy had not only *learn'd*, but was *aſſur'd*; and how was that? No doubt, by a careful obſervation of the Inſtructions given him by his Grandmother and Mother in the firſt place; as afterwards by a diligent attendance both to the Precepts and Example of that great Apoſtle whom he accompanyed; and finally by a ſerious Reflection upon what he had *learn'd* either of the one or the other.

This is abſolutely neceſſary in a Learner; 'tis the making that which he is taught, his own; 'tis like the Digeſtions perform'd in the Stomach and in the Bloud, which firſt turn the food into chyle, and afterwards into nutriment to all the parts of the Body. It was for want of this, that ſome in the Apoſtles days fell under the Character he gives in this Chapter, of ſuch as *are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.* V. 7.

Such indeed was the Evidence given to *Timothy* of the Truth of *thoſe things which he had learn'd*, that nothing but Application and Reflection, attended with Integrity

of

of Mind, could be wanting to render him fully *assur'd*. The *Scriptures* of the Old Testament, which he had *known from a Child*, do give so full and pregnant Evidence to the truth of Christianity, *the Law and the Prophets* were so perfectly *fulfill'd* by our blessed Saviour in the dispensation of the Gospel, that a right understanding of both, and a just comparing one with the other, must necessarily convince and satisfie an honest Mind. And St. *Paul*, of whose ability, probity, and good-will towards him, *Timothy* had such abundant Evidence, could add over and above, such Testimony to the truth of the Doctrine which he Preach'd, that nothing beyond it could be desir'd. He could, for instance, recount to him the violent Prejudices he himself had once lay'n under, the Zeal with which he then persecuted Christians, and which engag'd him in that very Expedition, in which he was converted; how he was then on a sudden struck down to the ground, and both he and those who were with him, astonish'd; how he saw a great light from Heaven, and heard the voice of Jesus himself distinctly calling to him from thence; how after this he remain'd for three days without sight, continuing in Prayer and Fasting, till *Ananias* was sent to him, and by laying his hands upon him in the Name of *Jesus* restor'd his sight to him, and admitted him into the Christian Church by Baptism; how since that time he had been favor'd with divers heavenly Visions and Revelations; how he found himself inwardly enlighten'd and strengthned, enabled to Preach the Christian Doctrine with great Zeal and Courage, and to confirm it with Miracles, and to expose his Life and all that was dear to him in this World upon its account. He could farther, since his becoming a Christian, expound to *Timothy* the Old Testament more thorowly, and apply

it more clearly to the Christian Revelation, *confounding* Gain-sayers, and *proving that* Jesus *was the very* Christ.

'Tis true, even all this must have been lost upon *Timothy*, if he had not duly attended and reflected upon it; and especially if he had been byas'd by any corrupt or vitious Inclinations, against the Christian Doctrine. In such a case, neither *Moses* nor *the Prophets*, not one *risen from the Dead*, not *Jesus* himself, after his Resurrection and Ascension, appearing and speaking from Heaven, nor any other Demonstration would prevail; so necessary Qualifications are probity in the first place, and then seriousness and diligence, in our enquiries after Divine Truth. And in all other cases, a just application and reflection are equally necessary in a Learner.

This therefore should be an Admonition to Learners, that they be not satisfied with being plac'd under able Teachers, nor glory in the regularity of their Education, till they are conscious of having perform'd their own part, in receiving and thorowly digesting what has been taught them. 'Tis your great Privilege and Felicity to have fallen into the Hands of those who are able and willing to instruct and improve you: but it will turn highly to your reproach and infamy, it will aggravate greatly your sin and misery, if you do not thankfully improve so great a Blessing, by the addition of your own Care and Industry.

Before I leave this Head, I shall only take notice of that dangerous Caution of the Church of *Rome*, whereby it's Members are restrain'd from examining the Principles of their Religion, and are oblig'd to believe as their Church believes without nicely enquiring into particulars; nay, are moreover forbid to read, and consequently *to know the Holy Scriptures*, not only whilst *Children*, but even when arriv'd at years of Understanding

ing and Discretion. Nothing certainly but consciousness of guilt could ever have induc'd that Church to take this scandalous course, whereby however it may prevail with its Members to believe, it can never render them *assur'd of those things which they have learn'd.* Men may be confident, as those that are most ignorant are most apt to be, without Examination; but rationally assur'd they can never be.

How contrary is this to the Pattern of our Text! Both *the Grandmother* and *Mother* of *Timothy* were it seems conversant with the *Holy Scriptures*, and took care that he, whilst *a Child*, should be so too; and afterwards as he grew up, he did not only *learn*, but *was assur'd*, which he never could have been upon solid grounds, unless he had first *known the Holy Scriptures*, and afterwards consider'd and examin'd what St. *Paul* taught him.

'Tis true, there is a very considerable difference between the Capacities of Men. Some are of weak and narrow Minds, and have but little leisure from the necessary business of humane life; and in that case, supposing them truly honest, there can be no question, but that God by his good Providence will take care that they be competently instructed; and will make fair allowances for their unavoidable Ignorance and Mistakes. But after all, the great and necessary Truths of Religion are so intelligible, and so plainly express'd in the *Holy Scriptures*, and a great part of those sacred Writings are so evidently calculated for the use of all sorts and conditions of Men, that those who are blest with the means which we enjoy, may by a tolerable diligence and application, such as they use in all other cases of concernment, not only *learn*, but attain to a reasonable *assurance of what they have learn'd.*

But

But I haſten to the laſt particular I obſerv'd in the Words, viz.

Thirdly, The great Obligation ſuch Perſons are under, who have been well inſtructed, and aſſur'd of thoſe things which they have learn'd, *to continue in them.*

This St. *Paul* urges upon *Timothy*; *Continue thou in the things which thou haſt learn'd, &c.* And certainly the Obligation is as great as is poſſible, both in gratitude to Almighty God, and to thoſe who have been his Inſtruments for our good; and in kindneſs and juſtice to our ſelves.

I. Such Perſons are oblig'd in gratitude to Almighty God, who hath confer'd ſo ſingular a Bleſſing upon them.

Next to our being made after the image of God, and our being reſtor'd to a capacity of recovering the Divine Image and favour by Jeſus Chriſt, is the Bleſſing of a good Education, the having had wiſe and good Parents for the Inſtruments of our coming into the World, and the being committed by them to the care of others like themſelves. There is according to all juſt Eſtimation, no compariſon between the Advantages of a meer deſcent from noble or wealthy Progenitors; and thoſe of an honeſt Parentage accompanied with a virtuous and liberal Education. Theſe may, and often do raiſe Men to as *real* a Superiority above ſuch, as can only boaſt of the former; as *they* are rais'd to an *Imaginary* one above the reſt of Mankind. Theſe are the proper and likely means of informing the Judgment aright, of rectifying the Temper of the Soul, of repairing the Image of God upon the Mind, of bringing Men to a due knowledge of themſelves and their main end, and diſpoſing them to act with a juſt regard thereunto, of rendering them uſeful and truly eaſy in this Life, and preparing and qualifying them for a better.

And

And surely they are greatly indebted to God, who are favour'd with such Advantages, especially considering that they are the Effects of his meer bounty, not our own choice. For 'tis he alone who can appoint what Parents we shall be born of, 'tis by his Providence that our Masters and Governors, those who have the charge of our younger Years are assign'd to us. The Improvement of these advantages is, under the conduct of his Grace, our part: but the bestowing them is wholly his.

II. There is a farther Obligation upon such Persons, in gratitude to those, who have been God's Instruments for their good.

Parents and Masters deserve a thankful acknowledgment, and ingenuous requital from those who have been the Subjects of their tenderness and care, which is such as we cannot be thorowly sensible of till we our selves become Parents and Masters to others. Then, if we discharge our duty faithfully, we best know, because we feel, the weight and trouble of such a Trust. It should therefore be one of the greatest Pleasures of our Souls, and it will be so, if they are rightly dispos'd, to make grateful returns to so great Benefactors; and the very best which they desire, or we can make, is *to continue in the things we have learn'd of them.*

'Tis true, if we are not first duly thankful to Almighty God, our first and chief Benefactor, upon this account, 'tis not likely we should be so to his Instruments: but both these considerations put together, may serve to increase the sense of our obligation to both. And if neither of these will work upon our Ingenuity, there is yet another which may move us from the principle of self Love, for

III. Such Persons are farther oblig'd in kindness and justice to themselves. Pro-

Providence hath done for them all that is possible, in an ordinary way, in order to their present and their everlasting Well-being. The Paths of Wisdom, Virtue and Happiness are plainly mark'd out to them, they are as it were led by the hand into the right way, and custome and exercise have render'd their duty easy and pleasant to them; so that they have nothing farther to do, but to persevere in a strait course, *turning neither to the right hand nor to the left.*

'Tis difficult and discouraging to begin to learn the Art of living, when we are grown into Years; and to be forc'd to break off evil Customs and Habits which we have been long contracting; (though this is absolutely necessary, if we have been so unhappy as not to begin sooner:) but nothing can be more easy, nothing more delightful, than to follow the Instructions which have been early given us, and frequently inculcated upon us, which we our selves have been made to understand and approve, and to persevere in those Habits which we have been accustom'd to from our tender Years.

Whereas on the other Hand, we cannot forsake the Instructions of our Youth, nor depart from the good Ways in which we have been us'd to walk, without contradicting our own Judgments, offering violence to our Consciences, disturbing the Peace of our Souls, and filling them with constant Regret and Horror; nor finally without exposing our selves to the highest displeasure of Almighty God, and the severest Punishment from his Hands. For, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* elegantly makes the Resemblance, *The Earth, which drinketh in the Rain, which cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth Blessing from God: But that which beareth Thorns and Briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.* But *beloved,*

Heb. 6. 7, 8, 9.

beloved, we are perſwaded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation, though we thus ſpeak.

Give me leave to conclude all, with applying very briefly the Exhortation in the Text to our ſelves, under the *Three* following Denominations.

I. To thoſe amongſt us who are devoted to any Spiritual Office or Employment in the Church of Chriſt.

As the Exhortation was here given to *Timothy*, Biſhop of the Church of *Epheſus*; ſo it concerns all the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church in every Age, *to continue in the things which they have learn'd and been aſſur'd of.*

The Special Occaſion of this Admonition, as I obſerv'd before, was the ſtarting up of ſome falſe and dangerous Teachers, who endeavour'd to corrupt both the Faith and Manners of Chriſtians. The Apoſtle compares them to *Jannes and Jambres, who withſtood Moſes*; *in like manner theſe alſo reſiſted the Truth, who were, as he adds,* V. 8. *Evil Men and Seducers, deceiving and being deceived.* V. 13. And I am afraid there is too much Occaſion upon the ſame Account, for the like Admonition in our Days alſo. There are ariſen up amongſt us, *Men of corrupt Minds, and Reprobate concerning the Faith*, Men that have preſum'd boldly and wantonly to diſpute againſt the antiently receiv'd and eſtabliſh'd Doctrines of Chriſtianity, making their ſhallow Conceptions the Meaſure of divine Revelation, and haughtily diſdaining to believe what they cannot fully comprehend; nay, there are ſome who have not only corrupted, but denyed the Faith, to whom the holy Scriptures ceaſe to be ſacred, and the inſpired Penmen are become of no authority, who make it their buſineſs to cavil at what they do not underſtand, and to expoſe to contempt what they have never conſider'd, and what, during the affected levity of their tempers, they are uncapable of conſidering; who having firſt de-

viated from the Practice of Christianity, accounting its Rules of Life and manners too strict, are forc'd afterwards for the ease of their minds to throw off it's very Principles too; in a word, who not only like those of whom St. *Paul* complains in this Chapter, have *denyed the Power*; but also lay'd aside *the very form of Godliness*, who have in effect renounc'd their Baptism, and broke loose from all the Obligations of their Education.

V. 5.

We ought therefore not only to be stedfast our selves; but to make it our care also to establish, as much as in us lies, the Flock committed to our Charge.

We have *learn'd*, and upon good grounds been *assur'd* of the things which we profess, *we know of whom we have learn'd them*, namely of the Inspir'd Penmen of the holy Scriptures, those sacred Books which we have taken as the Rule of our Faith and Practice and Doctrine, and from which, thorowly consider'd, we have wherewith *to stop the Mouths of all gainsayers*.

II. I may apply the same Admonition to all of us, as Christians.

It is our duty as such firmly to adhere to *the Form of Sound words* deliver'd to us at our *Baptism*, and to be true and faithful to the solemn Vow and Promise then made in our Names, which those of us who are come to years of Discretion, have, as it may be presum'd, taken upon our selves. *we know of whom we have learn'd* these things, namely of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, by the help of those sacred Books which lie open before us, for our constant instruction and direction, and in the due use of which, we may arrive to a well grounded *assurance*, upon the same Principles and Reasons upon which *Timothy* was *assur'd* of what he had *learn'd*. 'Tis to be hoped we have all of us been carefully instructed in them from our Childhood, and it becomes us to make them our daily

daily Study, that by a thorough acquaintance with them, we may be fortifyed against all the attempts of such as would either shock our Belief, or vitiate our Practice.

III. Let me in the last place apply this Admonition to those of us, who have had our Education at St. *Paul's* School.

A School that makes good the Inscription upon it's Walls, *viz. Schola catechizationis puerorum in fide Christi, Opt. max. & bonis literis*; which as it was designed by it's Pious and learned Founder, heretofore a Dean of this Cathedral Church, to these excellent purposes, so by the faithful and diligent management of it's worthy Overseers, the Worshipful Company of *Mercers*, it has been constantly blest with a succession of excellent Masters, Persons eminently skill'd in their Profession, and thorowly qualifyed to instruct those committed to their charge. So that we may upon this account also say, that *we know of whom we have learn'd.*

There we were early taught the Principles of True Religion, and the Rudiments of good Learning. There we daily read *the Holy Scriptures*, and were frequently Catechis'd, according to that *form of sound Words*, which our Church hath appointed for that use. There also we were daily Exercis'd in offering up our joynt Devotions to Almighty God, rendering thanks to him for his Blessings, and asking of him such good things as were suitable to our occasions and circumstances. There our Youth was form'd to Piety and Virtue, to real, not only formal, good manners; and there moreover diverse of us lay'd the sure Foundation of our future Studies. We are met together at this time to make a publick and grateful acknowledgment of these great Blessings to God and the World.

Let us therefore in the words of our Apostle, *continue in the things which we have learn'd.* So shall we truly answer

swer the end of our Founder, our Patrons, Benefactors and Masters; so shall we do honor to the Place of our Education; finally, so shall we best express and testifie our real Gratitude to Almighty God, and comply with the main design of our present assembling, which is by making this our publick acknowledgment, to put our selves in mind of the Obligations we are under.

Now to that good God who gave us our Beings, who form'd us in the Womb, who preserv'd, and Instructed us in our childhood and in our Youth, and who hath taken care of us to this day, to God even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Eternal Spirit, be ascribed all Praise and Glory, now and for ever. Amen.

FINIS.

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